

## Why God is Right to Damn Wrong, Part 2 - Romans 1:20-23 – March 20th, 2011

- This is part two of a series titled; "Why God is Right to Damn Wrong." Last week, in part one, I issued a warning about the subject matter.
- For the benefit of those who weren't with us for part one, you should probably be aware that this series will carry with it a PG13 rating, of sorts.
- The reason for this is that the rest of chapter one deals with abhorrent sexual sin and why God's wrath will come upon the wickedness of man.

- Now it's important I that preface today's teaching with the following statement; "God is right to damn sin, but He's also right to save the sinner."

"From this day forth, when God beholds the sinner, if his wrath should burn, he will remember that his own Son, as man, stood in the sinner's place, and bore the sinner's doom."

From a sermon by Charles Haddon Spurgeon delivered, December 24, 1871

- Before we look at our third reason that God is right to damn wrong, we need to quickly revisit the first two, as it will be germane to our study.
- In verses 18 and 19, Paul, in a way, takes the posture of a prosecuting attorney, and makes his opening statement before arguing his case.
- Paul will go from the "what," to the "why" and "how" of mans ungodliness and wickedness deserving a guilty verdict and the death sentence.

### 1. They deliberately suppress the truth (Verse 18)

- Paul writes that God's revealed wrath is against all the godlessness of men because they deliberately suppress the truth by their wickedness.

### 2. They plainly know God's truth (Verse 19)

- Paul goes onto say that they know the truth about God, because it was made known to them by God, and it was made plain to them from God.

### 3. They clearly see but reject God (Verse 20)

(20) For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

- v20 They're without excuse because God's invisible qualities eternal power and divine nature were clearly seen and understood since creation.
- In other words, God made Himself visible to all vis-a-vis His creation, His power, and His divine nature, thus mans wickedness is inexcusable.
- I would suggest that it's this fact that in the end will condemn everyone who when standing before God, will have no excuse for rejecting God.

The best quote I've ever heard as it relates to this was from Robert Jastrow, who was an Astrophysicist and the Director of NASA's Goodard Institute for Space Studies. Here's what he said; " At this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. ...Now we see how the astronomical evidence supports the biblical view of the origin of the world. The essential elements in the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis are now the same. Consider the enormity of the problem. Science has proved that the universe exploded into being at a certain given moment. It asks what cause produced this effect. Who or what put the matter and energy into the universe? And science cannot answer this question. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of his own reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance. He is about to conquer the highest peak. He pulls himself over the final rock, and he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been there for centuries."

<http://www.thoughtfulchristianity.net/?p=3139>

"... the reason for God's wrath is stated: men are without excuse—Men had the light, and that from God. His eternal power and divinity were, from creation onward, plain to men, from His works. - Napoleon, on a warship in the Mediterranean on a star-lit night, passed a group of his officers who were mocking at the idea of a God. He stopped, and sweeping his hand toward the stars, said, "Sirs, if you wish to get rid the world of God, you must first rid of these stars!" Men secretly believe there is a Power above them, and that their evil deeds deserve the wrath of that Power."

William Newell

- If man has clearly seen and understood, yet still rejected God, which they have, then what does this say about the fairness and justice of God.
- Sadly, God is seen as being unfair in His judgment of sin because the implication is that man did not know or understand the nature of God.
- Man must come to the realization that God is not the one on trial, man is. In our justice system, a man is presumed innocent until found guilty.

- In God's system of justice, man is guilty until "pronounced" innocent, only through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Calvary cross.
- When man understands, and knowingly rejects this, he stands in his own righteousness before the Judge of the universe pleading not guilty.
- This is why it is, and how it is that God, as the creator and judge of the universe, is right in pronouncing man guilty and damning him to hell.

"Hell, hell fire, the damnation of hell, eternal damnation, the resurrection of damnation, everlasting fire, the place of torment, destruction, outer darkness, the worm that never dies, the fire that is not quenched, the place of weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth, everlasting punishment—these are the words which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself employs. Away with the miserable nonsense which people talk in this day, who tell us that the ministers of the gospel should never speak of hell! They only show their own ignorance, or their own dishonesty, when they talk in such a manner. No person can honestly read the four Gospels and fail to see that they who would follow the example of Christ must speak of hell."

J.C. Ryle, "Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots" p. 209, 210.

"Now if someone objects, saying, This is a strange introduction to the gospel of God's *grace*, we answer, It lies here before us, this awful indictment of Romans One, and cannot be evaded! Moreover, until man knows his state of sin, he wants no grace. Shall pardon be spoken of before the sinner is proved a sinner? While the evidence is being brought in, the whole attention of the court is upon *that*. If the evidence of guilt be insufficient or inconclusive, there is no necessity for a pardon! Preachers and teachers have soft-pedalled sin, until the fear Of God is vanishing away. McCheyne used to Say, "A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hands of God" A preacher who avoids telling men the truth about their sin as here revealed, is the best tool of the devil." William Newell

God's loving purpose was that man would forever dwell with Him in intimate fellowship and love-not that he would suffer forever in the Lake of Fire. God knew what Adam and Eve and their descendants would do-but He did not predestine man to sin nor to be in torment eternally. The Lake of Fire was "prepared for the devil and his angels." God ...desires all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Salvation is for "whosoever believeth on him." To forgive Christ-rejecters would undermine both God's integrity and His justice. No one who spends eternity in the Lake of Fire (and many will) can blame God.

Dave Hunt (Facebook Post, March 8th, 2011)

#### **4. They futilely become dark in their hearts (Verse 21)**

(21) For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

- v21 Though they knew God, they neither glorified nor thanked God, thus their thinking became futile and their hearts became foolish and dark.
- Paul now drives it home even further by saying that the problem isn't that they didn't know God, the problem is that they indeed did know God.
- He even takes it a step further saying this is why they didn't glorify or thank God, and their minds became futile, and their hearts became dark.

- Here's what I'm thinking; when man is willfully rejecting the glorifying and thanking of God he will descend into the futility and folly of darkness.
- Let me say the same thing a different way; by not giving the Glory to God, we become vulnerable to, and susceptible to, the lies of the Devil.
- While not excusing it, this helps in explaining it, because what we see next is unspeakable foolishness, and wickedness of those in darkness.

#### **5. They wrongly claim to be wise as fools (Verse 22)**

(22) Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

- v22 Paul then goes on to tell them, that although they are wrongly claiming to be wise, that they had in fact actually become fools because of it.
- Is this not what those who mock and deny God claim? They fancy themselves of superior intelligence, and in so doing become ignorant fools.
- Truly, there is no one more foolish than he who claims to be wise all the while ignorantly, and stupidly, denying God the glory due His Name.

While it's not authenticated as being true according to the "Truth or Fiction," website, there's a great story illustrating this. "...An atheist became incensed over the preparation for Easter and Passover holidays and decided to contact the local ACLU about the discrimination inflicted on atheists by the constant celebrations afforded to Christians and Jews with all their holidays while the atheists had no holiday to celebrate. The ACLU jumped on the opportunity to once again pick up the cause of the godless, and assigned their sharpest attorneys to the case. The case was brought before a wise judge who after listening to the long, passionate presentation of the ACLU lawyers, promptly banged his gavel and declared, "Case dismissed!" The lead ACLU lawyer immediately stood and objected to the ruling and said, "Your honor, how can you possibly dismiss this case? Surely the Christians have Christmas, Easter and many other observances. And the Jews--why in addition to Passover they have Yom Kippur and Hanukkah... and yet my client and all other atheists have no such holiday!" The judge leaned forward in his chair and simply said "Obviously your client is too confused to know about, or for that matter even celebrate, the atheists' holiday!" The ACLU lawyer pompously said "We are aware of no such holiday for atheists, just when might that be, your honor?" The judge said, "Well it comes every year on exactly the same date---April 1st!" "April Fools Day"

**Psalms 14:1-3 NIV** (1) **For the director of music. Of David.** The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. (2) The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. (3) All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

#### **6. They foolishly replace the immortal God (Verse 23)**

(23) and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

- v23 In their foolishness, they replaced the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man, birds, animals, and reptiles.
- What Paul is saying here is that because man has rejected the God Who created man in His image, man is now in the market for a new god.
- As man now shops for a new god, to replace the true God, he will opt for one made in his image instead of God Who made man in His image.

One commentator said it best when they wrote; "Man cannot seem to resist the temptation to create God into his own corrupt image, or even in an image beneath himself; the great tragedy in this is that we inescapably become like the God we serve. It is absolutely essential that we constantly compare our conception of God against the reality of who God is as revealed in His Word; lest we too become guilty of worshipping a self-made God."

- May I suggest, and I speak of myself as well, that we as believers are prone to ever so subtly become guilty of worshipping other image gods.
- By way of example, and you can fill in the blank, \_\_\_\_\_ is a priority to me. What is it that you glorify? Whatever I glory, in turn glorifies me.
- I too can exchange the God who created me in His image, for His good pleasure, for a god created in my image, and for my good pleasure.

"They must have known better. No man in his senses can worship birds and beasts without feeling degraded by so doing. Natural reason rebels against such an insult to God, and as they would not listen to its voice, the heathen were left to fall into abominable vices. Let us never slight the checks of conscience, lest we should be given over to our own corrupt hearts. No doom could be more terrible."

Charles Spurgeon

The silliness of these “modern” shallow-pan days! How men are rushing back to the old pagan pit out of which God’s Word and His gospel would have delivered them! They suck up sin; they welter in wickedness; they profess to be wise! They sit at the feet of “professors” whose breath is spiritual cyanide. They idolize the hog-sty doctrines of a rotten Freud:<sup>24</sup> and count themselves “wise”! They say, “God is not a person; men evolved from monkeys; morals are mere old habits; self-enjoyment, self-expression, indulgence of all desires—this,” they say, “is the path of wisdom.” It is the path of those who go quickly down to the pit and on to judgment! The very morals of Sodom, as our Lord foretold, are rushing fast upon us, and God will bring again the awful doom of Sodom.

William Newell